

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

January 26, 2006

Maricopa Association of Governments Office
302 North First Avenue, Suite 200, Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Maricopa County: Mike Ellegood, Chairperson	Litchfield Park: Mike Cartsonis
ADOT: Dan Lance	Mesa: Patrick Pittenger for Jeff Martin
*Avondale: David Fitzhugh	Paradise Valley: Robert M. Cicarelli
Chandler: Patrice Kraus	Peoria: Chris Kmetty for David Moody
*El Mirage: B.J. Cornwall	Phoenix: Tom Callow
Fountain Hills: Randy Harrel	*Queen Creek: Mark Young
*Gila Bend: Lynn Farmer	RPTA: Bryan Jungwirth
*Gilbert: Tami Ryall	Scottsdale: Mary O'Connor
Glendale: Terry Johnson	Surprise: Randy Overmyer
Goodyear: Cato Esquivel	Tempe: Carlos De Leon
Guadalupe: Jim Ricker	*Wickenburg: Shane Dille
	Valley Metro Rail: John Farry

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ATTENDING

*Regional Bicycle Task Force: Randi Alcott, RPTA	*Pedestrian Working Group: Eric Iwersen, City of Tempe
*Street Committee: Larry Shobe, City of Tempe	*Telecommunications Advisory Group:
*ITS Committee: Alan Sanderson	
* Members neither present nor represented by proxy. + - Attended by Videoconference	

OTHERS PRESENT

Eric Anderson, MAG	Carol Slaker, ADOT
Ken Hall, MAG	Dean Giles, MAG
Roger Herzog, MAG	Lynn Timmons, City of Phoenix
Eileen O'Connell, MAG	Stuart Boggs, Valley Metro/RPTA
Paul Ward, MAG	Peggy Carpenter, Scottsdale
Steve Tate, MAG	Jim Creedon, Landry and Creedon
Dave Meinhart, City of Scottsdale	Bill Hayden, ADOT
Peggy Carpenter, City of Scottsdale	Mike Connors, HDR
Ed Fritz, MCDOT	Trent Kelso, HDR
Bob Hazlett, MAG	William Crowley
Norm Phillips	

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Mike Ellegood called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. Approval of December 8, 2005 Draft Minutes

Addressing the first order of business, Mr. Ellegood asked if there were any changes or amendments to the meeting minutes. Mr. Tom Callow moved to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Mary O'Connor seconded, and the minutes were subsequently approved by unanimous voice vote of the Committee.

3. Call to the Audience

Mr. Ellegood stated that he had not received any request to speak cards from the audience, and moved to the next item on the Agenda.

4. Transportation Director's Report

Mr. Ellegood introduced Mr. Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, to provide the Transportation Director's report. Mr. Anderson addressed the Committee, and informed those in attendance that the sales tax revenues for November of 2005 were up by 14.6 percent in comparison with the year before, and that the overall revenues for December of 2005 were also up by 19.1 percent over the previous year. Mr. Anderson said that for the first 6 months of this fiscal year, the overall collections were up by \$26.0 million in comparison with last year, which represented a 17.4 percent increase. Mr. Anderson then addressed the recent *Construction Cost Forum*, which was held on January 6, 2006, in the City of Phoenix. He stated that the forum was well received, and included speakers and representatives from many agencies throughout the region. Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that staff has compiled the findings from the forum, which were attached in the TRC Agenda packet, and would be discussed as part of Agenda item #8. He said that this information from the forum was presented yesterday evening to the MAG Regional Council.

Mr. Anderson then informed the Committee that the consulting firm of DMJM & Harris was selected to work on the *Interstate 10-Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study*. He said that the study would be moving forward to the MAG Management Committee and the MAG Regional Council for formal approval during February of 2006. He also informed those in attendance that Pinal County was hosting a Regional Transportation Summit on February 9, 2006, at the Ak Chin Casino in the City of Maricopa. Mr. Anderson said that Pinal County would be addressing the issue of regional growth, and the potential need for a county transportation plan. There were no questions, and this concluded Mr. Anderson's report to the Committee.

5. Approval of Consent Agenda

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood addressed Agenda item #6 (ADOT Red Letter Process), and asked whether any members in attendance had questions pertaining to the information that has been provided in the packet. There were no questions, and Mr. Ellegood did not request a formal motion for the recommended approval of the Consent Agenda item.

7. Selection of CMAQ Funded Dirt Road Paving Projects for FY 2007

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood introduced Mr. Paul Ward, MAG Transportation Programming Manager, to provide an update on the selection of CMAQ Funded Dirt Road Paving Projects for FY 2007. Mr. Ward called the Committee's attention to the Memorandum and Table in Attachment Two, located at the back of the TRC Agenda packet. He informed the Committee that a total of \$1.35 million in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds has been recommended to be programmed in FY 2007 for the paving of dirt roads in the MAG Region. He stated that following the ranking process carried out by the MAG Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee on October 6, 2005, the Committee recommended to approve funding for the Town of Cave Creek (\$250,000), the City of Chandler (\$325,000), and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation (\$775,000).

Mr. Ward requested that the Committee review the MAG Air Quality Technical Advisory Committee's project recommendations, and in turn, recommend approval of the projects for FY 2007 CMAQ funding. Mr. Ward then answered several questions from the Committee. Discussion followed, and Mr. Tom Callow moved to recommend that the three projects are awarded CMAQ funds to be programmed in FY 2007, and also recommended authorizing MAG Staff to prepare a TIP Administrative Adjustment to include the projects for Cave Creek, Chandler and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation. Ms. Mary O' Connor seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by subsequent voice vote of the Committee. There was no further discussion.

8. Update on Construction Costs and Possible Impact on the ADOT Life Cycle Program

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood introduced Mr. Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, to provide an update on construction costs and their possible impact on the ADOT Life Cycle Program. Mr. Anderson addressed the Committee, and called their attention to the screen at the front of the room. He distributed a PowerPoint presentation handout to those in attendance, and provided an overview of the recent *Challenge of Construction Forum* that was held on January 6, 2006. Mr. Anderson stated that the event was well attended, and included speakers from MAG, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), the Arizona School Facilities Board, the Home Builders Association of Central Arizona, the Arizona Builders' Alliance, and the Associated General Contractors of America.

Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that there has been a very high level of construction activity in the region, especially with regard to the housing and commercial development sectors. He said that the housing industry was still going strong, and noted that there have been over 63,000 housing permits that were issued in the metropolitan region over the past year. He said that another 20,000 permits were issued in Pinal County, in rapidly developing areas adjacent to the MAG Region. He also addressed the commercial sector, and said that many mid to high rise commercial projects may be delayed due to rising construction costs. Mr. Anderson said that the price increases in commodities such as cement, lumber and steel; and labor shortages have resulted in fewer bidders and higher bids. He specifically addressed shortages in cement, and the rising price implications of cement on the regional construction industry. Mr. Anderson stated that based on recent findings, overall construction costs have actually increased anywhere from 20 to 50 percent over the past year. While acknowledging that a “slowdown” in regional construction activity may in fact take some of the pressure off of higher costs, he addressed the impacts of rising costs on the ADOT Highway Life Cycle Program.

Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that price increases and commodity shortages have essentially resulted in fewer bidders and higher bids, especially on the regional freeway system. As an example of this situation, Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that the Power Road to University Drive segment of the Loop 202 Red Mountain Freeway only received two bids, and increased in cost by 48 percent, from \$144.0 million to \$213.0 million. He highlighted a number of conditions and impacts presently faced by contractors, which specifically involve increased prices, shortage in materials, and most importantly, shortages in labor that result in reduced productivity, longer schedules, and situations whereby companies have to pay higher wages to maintain adequate staff to complete projects on time.

Mr. Anderson said that at the forum, there was discussion pertaining to the process of modifying contracts. He noted that this involved potential solutions such as developing a shared risk liability between owners and contractors within the contract framework for pricing; addressing material specifications in an effort to reduce the need for special materials; and dealing with the current cement shortage. Mr. Anderson also provided a brief overview of the Mexican cement market, and stated that participants at the forum recommended reducing, or eliminating the duty on Mexican produced cement or other materials exported to Arizona. He also noted that forum participants agreed that collectively, they needed to do a better job of marketing the high rate of growth and construction activities occurring in the region to the rest of the nation, in an effort to attract bidders to our area.

Mr. Anderson then addressed the MAG Region’s FY 2006 Freeway Program, and informed the Committee that there was a \$121.0 million program overage. He said that in an effort to make adjustments, ADOT found projects that were not ready to obligate in FY 2006, and deferred projects in priority order to maintain fiscal balance. Mr. Anderson displayed a list of freeway projects that were not ready to obligate in FY 2006, which resulted in approximately \$100 million. He said that ADOT was prepared to handle the \$100 million deficit in the program, and that the agency was in the process of revising the Freeway Life Cycle Program for FY 2007. Mr. Anderson said that in an attempt to address cost overage concerns in the program, ADOT did not want to make radical changes and will continue to monitor construction costs in an effort to maintain fiscal balance.

Mr. Anderson then addressed a number of questions, and discussion followed pertaining to rising costs and existing market conditions with regard to labor. Mr. Mike Ellegood thanked Mr. Anderson, and congratulated MAG Staff for taking the role to host the *Challenge of Construction Forum*. There was no further discussion, and this concluded Mr. Anderson's report to the Committee.

9. Grand Avenue Major Investment Study - Phase II

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood introduced Mr. Roger Herzog, MAG Senior Project Manager, to provide an update on the Grand Avenue Major Investment Study – Phase II. Mr. Herzog briefly addressed the Committee, and informed those in attendance that a Major Investment Study has been completed for Grand Avenue between SR 101L and McDowell Road. Mr. Herzog stated that a copy of the *Draft Executive Summary* was located in Attachment Four of the TRC Agenda Packet for the Committee's review, and then introduced Mr. Trent Kelso with the consulting firm of HDR to provide an overview of the project. Mr. Kelso addressed the Committee, and provided information on the general layout of the Final Report. He stated that a total of six working papers were completed to form the basis of the report, which included an introduction; environmental and socioeconomic conditions; existing, programmed and planned facilities; issues and needs identification; an alternatives analysis; and recommended improvements. He also noted that the report had a separate Executive Summary.

____ Mr. Kelso then addressed environmental and socioeconomic conditions, and provided an overview of environmental justice and hazardous materials issues associated with the project area. He also addressed the potential mitigation of construction impacts that may be needed once future projects are identified, and then briefly addressed land use. Mr. Kelso then addressed existing, programmed and planned facilities, and informed the Committee that there were a total of eight grade separations along the corridor. He said that a total of seven grade separations already existed, and that ADOT was currently constructing the eighth grade separation at Grand Avenue under 59th and Glendale Avenues, which was expected to be completed soon. Mr. Kelso also stated that there was only one six-legged intersection remaining to grade separated at 19th Avenue/McDowell Road/Grand Avenue, and that the planned widening of Grand Avenue to six lanes between 83rd Avenue and 99th Avenue was programmed for FY 2007.

Mr. Kelso said that a total of two public meetings, 14 individual meetings and presentations, and 10 stakeholder meetings were conducted during the study process. He stated that a total of 14 issues and needs were identified for the corridor, which were taken forward through an "alternatives analysis." Ultimately, the final recommendations were selected, which placed an emphasis on intersection improvements; access management; and grade separations and community mitigation.

____ Mr. Kelso stated that as part of the MAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the implementation plan for the recommended improvements for Grand Avenue would be split into four phases, totaling \$151.7 million. Of this total, \$31.1 million would be completed during Phase I (2006-2010); \$21.0 million would be completed during Phase II (2011-2015); that there

would not be any expenditures during Phase III (2016-2020); and that a total of \$99.6 million would be utilized during Phase IV (2021-2025). He informed the Committee that Phase IV would include funding for three grade separations at 19th Avenue, 35th Avenue and Bethany Home Road, as identified in the RTP Freeway Life Cycle Program.

Mr. Kelso then displayed a number of maps showing the locations of grade separations, intersection improvements and recommended access management improvements. He also addressed a number of recommended community mitigation projects along the Grand Avenue Corridor pertaining to landscaping, screen walls, sidewalks, street lighting, the under grounding of utilities, and improved intersection aesthetics at select intersections. Mr. Kelso then summarized his presentation by showing a detailed implementation plan by Phase and dollar amounts totaling to \$151.7 million.

Discussion followed, and Mr. Patrick Pittenger of the City of Mesa called the Committee's attention to Page ES-13 of the *Draft Executive Summary* in Attachment Four of the RTP Agenda packet. Mr. Pittenger stated that the report indicated the City of Glendale would contribute \$10 million toward project expenses, and inquired as to how they would pay for the expenses. Mr. Kelso stated that the recommendation is limited to the available regional funding, and that any overages in connection with the city contribution would be the responsibility of the city, and that the scope of the city's involvement would have to be established on a project basis with ADOT through an Intergovernmental Agreement. Further discussion followed on items pertaining to whether the study area included or recommended a bicycle corridor; concern over the sidewalks being too narrow, and suggestions from the Committee that a larger bicycle/pedestrian path be considered; and questions as to whether the study was compatible with a commuter rail line. Mr. Dan Lance then stated that Grand Avenue was not a candidate for bicycle lanes and bike travel, and that ADOT and the City are trying to address connectivity and movement between adjacent neighborhoods along the corridor. Mr. Kelso also stated that the improvements along Grand Avenue do not preclude a commuter rail line.

At this time, Mr. Ellegood recognized a request by Mr. William Crowley to address the Committee. Mr. Crowley approached the podium, and stated that ADOT representatives were not present at any of the MAG Bicycle or Pedestrian Committee Meetings. He also voiced his concerns over the dangerous conditions along Grand avenue. He told the Committee that they are not doing the job right on Grand Avenue, and needed to use "paint as a weapon" by adequately putting stripes on cross walks, and painted bike lanes. Mr. Crowley also noted that they need to provide lights in tunnels in an effort to make them safer, and concluded his statements. Mr. Ellegood thanked Mr. Crowley for his comments.

Discussion followed, and Ms. Mary O'Connor moved to recommend the proposed package of projects on Grand Avenue between SR 101L and McDowell Road for inclusion in the ADOT Freeway/Highway Life Cycle Program. The motion was seconded by Mr. Randy Overmyer and unanimously approved by subsequent voice vote of the Committee. There was no further discussion on this item.

10. Proposed FY 2007 Projects for the MAG Transportation Division

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood introduced Mr. Eric Anderson, MAG Transportation Director, to provide an overview of the proposed FY 2007 Projects for the MAG Transportation Division. Mr. Anderson informed the Committee that MAG is currently considering a number of projects for FY 2007, and called their attention to the list of proposed consultant projects in Attachment Five of the TRC Agenda packet. Mr. Anderson addressed the list, and stated that the types of projects that MAG would like to conduct include an Update of the Congestion Management System (CMS) for \$300,000 to \$400,000; a 2007 External Travel Survey for \$300,000; an Implementation of Regional Traffic Monitoring System for \$95,000; a Local Street and Highway Cost and Bid Database, with the price yet to be determined; a Commuter Rail Update for \$300,000; a 2007 Regional Travel Speed Study for \$500,000; a Pedestrian Design Assistance Program for \$200,000; and a Bicycle Design Assistance Program for \$300,000.

Mr. Anderson also stated that two workshops would be added to the list, which included a two-day Contact Sensitive Design workshop, and an Access Management workshop. Mr. Anderson stated that it was important for access control to be elevated in the planning and design process. He also informed the Committee that a third workshop addressing Public Involvement techniques could be added to the list for FY 2008. Discussion followed, and Mr. Anderson said that ADOT is planning a State Rail Infrastructure Assessment, and it may be suitable to follow up with a commuter rail study from this report. He noted that MAG staff will develop a Scope of Work, with input from regional stakeholders, that could potentially go before the MAG Management Committee and MAG Regional Council sometime during April or May of 2006. Several members of the Committee also inquired as to whether there would be any changes to the EMME/2 regional travel demand software, and also addressed support for the concept of a commuter rail study for the region. Mr. Anderson stated that the intent of this item was for information and discussion, and to receive input from the Committee before the FY 2007 projects are finalized. There was no further discussion on this item.

11. Member Agency Update

Addressing the next order of business, Mr. Ellegood asked for updates and comments from members of the Committee. Mr. Mike Cartsonis addressed the issue of peripheral growth into Pinal County, and asked Mr. Anderson if Pinal County was involved in any joint discussions with MAG to address growth and transportation issues. Mr. Anderson stated that ongoing discussions have occurred between MAG, the Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG) and Pinal County, and that further discussions will escalate over time. He noted that one of the primary concerns was trying to construct regional freeways in Pinal County sooner, which would involve ongoing discussions between ADOT, MAG, CAAG and Pinal County.

Ms. Mary O'Connor briefly addressed the Committee, and offered to give a presentation on the demonstration project for photo radar along the Loop 101 Pima Freeway. It was suggested that this item be placed on the March 2006 Committee Agenda as an information item. Further

discussion followed, and Mr. Ellegood informed the Committee that he has received a request from a municipality to use MAG Right-of-way preservation funding from the Life Cycle Program. He stated that members of MCDOT Staff thought that it would be a good resource to use these funds. Mr. Ellegood said that this issue may come up again in the future, and that there simply is not enough money in the program to accommodate such requests and would not like to see such demands of the program's funding in the future.

At this time, Mr. Ellegood recognized a request by Mr. William Crowley to address the Committee. Mr. Crowley approached the podium, and displayed a Valley Metro map of Route 685. He said that the information pamphlet doesn't show all of the stops, and isn't complete or accurate. Mr. Crowley also stated that the light rail line is not going to the actual Metro Center mall, but to the general area. He said that planners needed to do a better job, and concluded his statements. Mr. Ellegood thanked Mr. Crowley for his comments. There was no further discussion.

12. Next Meeting Date

Mr. Ellegood informed members in attendance that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on March 23, 2006. There being no further business, Mr. Ellegood adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.